

## Exploring language education in Scotland: multilingual aspiration in a monolingual perspective

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Scotland attempts to dispel the hegemonic identity of a 'monolingual country'. The aim of this paper is to explore the educational habitus in contemporary Scotland as articulated by two mechanisms. These are: efforts to promote linguistic vitality and language revitalization, with the development of new curricula and pedagogies; and the working of governing mechanisms and policy instruments, particularly the 1+ 2 Language Approach (Scottish Government 2012).

With this in mind, specific policy documents such as 1+2 Language Policy (Scottish Government 2012), National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-2017 (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2012), Consultation Paper of Gaelic Medium Education (**GME**) Bill (Scottish Government 2014) and their related documents were studied. A discursive analytic tool was used: Spolsky's (2004, 2009, 2012) a three component model of language policy – *practices*, *beliefs* and *management*. According to Spolsky, *practices* "are the observable behaviors and choices" (2009, p. 4); *beliefs* "are the values or statuses assigned to named languages, varieties and features" (2009, p. 4) and *management* is the explicit and observable effort... to modify practices and beliefs" (2009, p. 4).

### Language revitalisation

Efforts for linguistic vitality and language revitalisation have been extensively put forward. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has been the statutory public body charged with the promotion of Gaelic in Scotland in broadcasting, signs, public information and other public domains. GME had been strengthened and increased each year; in 2017-2018, there were 64 classes with 1,242 children for Gaelic medium provision age 0-3; there were also 54 classes with 1,078 Gaelic medium nurseries and 58 Gaelic medium primary schools with 3,278 pupils (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2018). Efforts for the recruitment and training of Gaelic medium teachers continued, and adult education learning opportunities are offered, with 9 Further Education Colleges offering Gaelic courses (Scottish Funding Council 2016).

Apart from Gaelic, Scotland has also promoted Scots. Scots is offered as a language under the umbrella of 1+2 Language Policy and the Scottish Government funds project such as Scots Language Dictionaries (see <http://www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk/>).

Despite these efforts, language revitalisation is hindered. Languages in Scotland have often been seen as a matter of territoriality (Van Parijs 2010). "In Scotland, the language issue is seen in narrow geographical terms – 'it's spoken up there - North West Highlands'" (Phipps and Fassetta 2015, p. 18). Gaelic is also seen more as symbol rather than communication (Paterson and O'Hanlon 2015) and public views sometimes oppose Gaelic revitalisation because of the tension between Gaelic and Scots (Dunmore 2017). Furthermore, teacher shortages for GME undermine future plans for language planning in support of minority languages (Milligan Dombrowski et al. 2014) and, although there has been an increase in new speakers of Gaelic (McLeod and O'Rourke 2015), the overall number of Gaelic speakers

has decreased (NROS 2013). Finally, a minority of children have Gaelic at home (Wentworth 2017) and, along with a scarcity of books in Gaelic, and the small influence of home context and family in the development of literacy, as MacQuarrie and Lyon (2015) report, have both proved a challenge for practitioners (Stephen et al. 2010).

## **1+2 Language Policy**

The 1+2 Language Policy emphasises the diversity of Scotland by including Scotland's own languages, Gaelic and Scots, community languages, and British Sign Language (BSL). It follows international trends in language education systems, introducing language learning in the early stages of primary school, and even pre-school. It encourages the introduction of languages related to powerful economies, such as Chinese, Portuguese etc, so Scotland can remain a leading competitive nation. For pupils whose mother tongue is not English, their first additional language (L2) should be English, although all pupil languages should be celebrated in the community, and pupils should maintain and develop their mother tongue. Local authorities should design a language strategy encouraging the continuation of mother tongue learning, plus foreign language learning, ensuring adequate resources for both. Furthermore the policy recommends effective teaching methods, such as the use of songs and rhymes, games, direct teaching, paired and group activities and a whole school (holistic) approach to language learning. Teaching of cultural elements are encouraged via the use of 'interdisciplinary' approaches, and aspects of citizenship and international education. Moreover, the policy prescribes that children should be exposed increasingly to real-life examples of fluent language from native speakers. Finally, it recognises that primary school teachers need knowledge of language pedagogy, and they need to maintain their language skills throughout their teaching career, but it sets no benchmarks for teachers' language qualifications.

The 1+2 Policy does not allocate sufficient time to satisfy language proficiency goals (Phipps and Fassetta 2015) and management attitude to language is 'laissez faire' and left to individual schools' priorities and local authorities (Phipps and Fassetta 2015; Hancock 2014). Teachers are not confident enough to teach modern languages and they do not often link the teaching of other languages with literacy in any language (Valdera Gil and Crichton 2018). O'Hanlon et al. (2016) report lack of availability of qualified language teachers and a need for high quality teacher training, as well as little consideration for English as Additional Language. At the same time, although the policy tries to promote languages, there is a limited choice of taught languages; that means only those where the Scottish Qualification Authority offers qualifications. Language learning does not take into consideration any of the heritage languages of migrants and provision and practice are inadequate to date (Hancock 2014), for example there is no opportunity for teacher training under General Teaching Council of Scotland for heritage languages such as Polish, Poland being the third most popular place for adults living in Scotland to be born (NROS 2013).

## **Conclusion**

Each mechanism presents paths whereby efforts for multilingualism promote monolingual hegemony as the default position of individual speakers, and the state. Multilingual classroom realities are approached through a monolingual lens, exposing a monolingual habitus, as Gogolin and Kroon (2003) and Lourenço et al. (2018) have described in their work. This paper reviews some monolingual practices and ideologies in language teaching

which are strengthened through monolingual theoretical positions; Scottish multilingual aspiration thereby ends as monolingual practice.

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